

U. S. PTO Customer No. 25280

Case #5063A

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 were pending in the application. Claims 18-21 have been canceled pursuant to a restriction requirement. Claims 1, 11 and 14 have been amended. Claim 22 has been added. Thus claims 1-17 and 22 are subject to continued examination. Each of these claims is believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, an action to that effect is requested at this time.

RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT:

Applicants at this time confirm the prior provisional election to prosecute the claims of Group I (claims 1-17.) The claims in the non-elected groups have been canceled in order to progress prosecution.

FORMAL REJECTIONS:

Claims 11 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112 second paragraph. Claims 11 and 14 have been amended in what is believed to be a substantially cosmetic manner set forth above so as to address each of these rejections. In light of such amendments, reconsideration and withdrawal of all outstanding formal rejections is requested at this time.

ART REJECTIONS:

Claims 1,4-13, 15 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,887,416 to Shimono et al. Claims 1-5, 7-8, 14, and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,902,662 to Kerr. Continued rejection on this basis is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested at this time.

As set forth above, each of the independent claims has been amended to recite that the rubber backing sheet is integrated in contacting relation to the other side of the pile backing.

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This feature is believed to distinguish over the teachings of Shimono et al. in which a bonding layer (4) of latex is disposed between the base cloth and the rubber sheet (3).

Independent claims 1 and 22 further recite that the pile backing and rubber backing sheet have substantially matched shrinkage character under industrial washing and drying conditions with each of the pile backing and the rubber backing sheet characterized by shrinkage of less than about 2.5% when subjected to industrial washing and drying. It is respectfully submitted that such characteristics are not disclosed in the prior art of record.

As regards claim 11 (now presented in independent form), the sole pending rejection to this claim is understood to be an obviousness rejection based on Shimono et al. As indicated above, claim 11 recites that the rubber backing sheet is integrated in contacting relation to the pile backing thus distinguishing over the teachings in Shimono et al. In addition, claim 11 retains the recitation that the pile material weighs less than about 20 ounces per square yard. As best understood, this feature is not taught or suggested by Shimono et al. Rather, the portion of Shimono et al. relied upon by the Office Action (Col. 4, lines 13-14) is directed to the base cloth through which the pile material is tufted. In the example relied upon by the Office Action the weight of pile material (i.e. pile density) is 1320 grams per square meter which is substantially greater than 20 ounces per square yard. Thus, the art relied upon does not appear to teach or suggest all features of claim 11.

CONCLUSION:

In light of the amendments and remarks set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that all remaining claims stand in condition for allowance and request that all such claims be passed to issue. While an attempt has been made to address all outstanding issues, to any extent that one or more issues remain, the undersigned respectfully requests a telephone conference to resolve such issues.

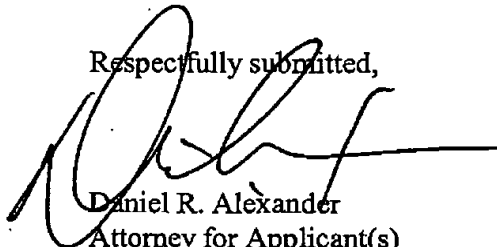
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A request for a three (3) month extension of time accompanies this amendment.
To any extent required, a request for an additional extension of time is hereby made. Please
charge any fees or credit any overpayment in connection with this Amendment to Deposit
Account 04-0500.

April 1, 2003

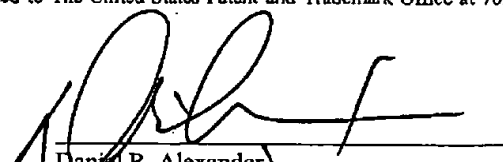
Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted to The United States Patent and Trademark Office at 703-872-9310 on April 1, 2003.



Daniel R. Alexander
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